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Potential of water sports in running water in Himachal Pradesh

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Abstract

In today's society, sports events have become the focus of attention, occupy an important position in the sports industry, while bringing economic and social benefits. The rivers of Himachal Pradesh offer great scope for enjoying Water Sports in Himachal Pradesh. The aim of the paper is to explore potential of water sports in running water in Himachal Pradesh as a popular and growing activity among water sports adventure enthusiasts. In India study is being done in prior to understand the water sports activities and trends. It is evident that water sports is one of the growing segments of tourism industry. Himachal Pradesh most exotic states in India also offers amazing opportunities for adventure freaks. Himachal Pradesh is a place having mass tourist domestic and international both so it has a great future in the water sports activity sector to boost economy and employment. With the growing demand of water sports activity, the paper explores the potential of water sports in moving water in Himachal Pradesh as a new craze. In this paper the study emphasize about the different types of water sports in moving water, new water sports trends and innovations. This study also helps in knowing about the various water sports activity destinations in Himachal Pradesh, safety gears, risk factors and focus on the effect of water sports in the nature.

Keywords: Physical activity, tourism, innovation, safety gears

Introduction

Water recreation is one of the most popular leisure activities. It can be defined as activities involving the whole body or face coming in contact with water, either in natural or artificial waters (Stott 2019) ^[6]. Water sports is a game which is played in or on the water such as swimming, water polo, surfing, river rafting etc. It is a physical activity in which a player needs to be physically and mentally fit to play a game on or in the water. Water sports is a fastest growing activity and gaining popularity among tourist and peoples of young India. The National Institute of Water Sports (NIWS) is a organization under the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India which is responsible for the study, innovation, research, and training in the field of water sports activity. People interested in water sports education, training and business can take certifications and license from this academy to grow and build their business and career in the water sports activities.

Himachal Pradesh is a beautiful hill state in India. Lying in the snow-topped Himalayan ranges, this North Indian state is blessed with unpolluted natural beauty, breathtaking sceneries, lofty snow peaks, deep gorges, verdant valleys, snow-fed rivers, enchanting lakes, mesmerizing flower carpeted landscapes, ancient temples, shrines and magnificent monasteries. All these exotic varieties make Himachal the perfect place for adventure sightseeing, relaxing and having unforgettable holidays.

Himachal Pradesh also offers amazing opportunities for adventure freaks. Whether it's extreme adventure sports such as river rafting and banana boat riding or leisurely activities such as boat cruises, fishing and swimming. Himachal Pradesh has something to offer to everyone. In short, water sports enthusiasts can enjoy a huge range of water sports activities in different parts of the state. One of the most exotic states in India, Himachal Pradesh has numerous opportunities for all kinds of water sports. From all the thrilling water sporting activities that one can enjoy in the country, the ones undertaken in Himachal Pradesh make you experience a unique adventure.

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The rivers that flow through state offer great scope for enjoying Water Sports in Himachal Pradesh. Activities such as rafting, surfing, Swimming, Rowing, Canoeing and Angling are greatly enjoyed by both national and international tourists. The rapid gushing water of Sutlej, Ravi, Chenab and Beas are incredible sources that furnish a thrilling dimension to your fascinating adventure.

If adventure enthusiasts truly want to discover the true hues of nature, then Himachal Pradesh is the place to be. With its distinctive topography, Himachal Pradesh offers a plethora of destinations where some of the best hair-raising activities can be enjoyed. Himachal Pradesh can stir up the spirits of the adventurers.

During the summer and autumn season, people can enjoy the best of water sports activities in Himachal Pradesh. Snow and rain-fed rivers of Himachal Pradesh are so cold that it can chill the spines of adventurers. In Himachal Pradesh, water sports activities can be enjoyed in Sutlej, Chenab, Beas and Ravi River streams. Here, tourists can enjoy high-end rapids in these gushing rivers and rapid level is from IV to VI. Only chosen ones, who can pass the fitness test, are allowed to face the rapids in Himachal Pradesh.

The river stretches in Himachal Pradesh become ferocious when they pass through the rocky cliffs and snow-capped mountains. One of the most exciting and challenging rivers to raft in the Indian Himalaya is Sutlej.

Water sports is a physical and energy consuming activity and it has a number of advantages which helps in boosting our physical fitness and rejuvenate our minds and body. It keeps us highly fit and healthy. This sports helps us to burn calories and keeps the blood flowing in the body in specific manner. Water sports recline the limits of our body and provide a high efficiency workout and makes our body stronger and gives a sense of achievement. It helps in developing confidence and motivation which helps people in taking risk in their life and work. Water sports help to come out from usual, stress, bad emotions and boring life.

Although water sports has also disadvantages like highly risk oriented and getting injury during the time of activity. However, the fun and enjoyment from water activities pose health and physical risks such as drowning and injuries. The term "risk" is used to describe the probability of exposure to a hazard that can lead to certain (adverse) health incidents or injuries. Among the risk of injuries during water activities are drowning, slipping and falling, cuts and illness such as allergic reaction, skin rashes, itches, stomach aches, or headaches due to swimming in water contaminated with pathogens (Allen County Department of Health 2021) [1]. In Malaysia, many drowning cases occur in rivers, lakes, and abandoned mines. These cases are increasing every year, with an average rate of 1.5 deaths per day in 2018 (The Malaysian Fire and Rescue Department 2018) [7]. Meanwhile, negligence when doing activities near water areas could also cause visitors to slip, fall, and even be swept away by water currents (Timbuong 2020) [9]. In addition, Malaysia also warned of the risk of leptospirosis at natural water spots after at least two people died after taking a dip in a waterfall (The Straits Times 2016) [8]. In Himachal Pradesh, only professionals are advised to participate in water sports. Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports is a training institute where people can learn the basics of adventure activities. They also provide basic and advanced courses for all types of water sports. It has also disadvantages like expensive sports gear and activity fees charge. There is also a problem of family emotions and care who worry about the safety of ours. Water

sports is a environment friendly game. There is no harm to nature and society due to water sports and it is one of the example of sustainable tourism. Government of India is also playing an important role in developing water sports destinations and games as well. Institutes are made for the training and licensing of water sports game which will help a water sports lover to learn the art of doing activity in a right and safe way. Water sports is achieving a top activity in the field of sports tourism in the present time of era.

At its inception, swimming was understood simply as moving in water – first, in order to survive, and then, to compete. Today, the term clearly connotes swimming sports, and as such can be defined as an activity in which a person practices a regulated Olympic sport in order to move as fast as possible through the water. Thanks to the propulsive forces generated by arm, leg, and body movements overcoming the resistance the water presents to progress (Saavedra *et al.*, 2003) [5]. The skills of swimming have been adapted to different contexts and participants. The result is that there are now a great diversity of additional water activities: aquatic Olympic sports (water polo, diving, and synchronized swimming), non-Olympic sports (lifesaving, fin swim,...), leisure activities (aqua-aerobic, fit swim,...), health activities (hydrotherapy, balneotherapy,...). The term "Aquatic Activities" covers all these plus swimming, and can be defined as motor activities performed in water for purposes that may be utilitarian, competitive, educational, therapeutic, or recreational. With regard to research, swimming is probably the most studied of all sports (Barbosa *et al.*, 2010) [3].

Water sports is a game which is played in or on the water as well as on still water and on moving water. The types of water sports are:

Individual water sports: Individual water sports brings out the best in every contender competing. These sports needs different skills, but overall, they require strength, stamina, determination and a desire to win and excel. These are Swimming, Surfing, Water skiing, Wake boarding, Skim boarding, Body boarding, Paddle boarding, Cliff diving, Kite surfing, Wind surfing, Jet skiing, Triathlon etc.

Team water sports: Sometimes, water sports are more fun in a group than going alone. These sports need teamwork, balance, energy, synchronized movements and a joint effort to win. Synchronized swimming, Water polo, Rafting, Kayaking, Canoeing, Sailing, Power boating, Yachting, Dragon boat racing etc. are some team water sports activities.

Recreational water sports: If you're in the water just to have fun, recreational water sports are here to help you relax, refresh and relieve stress. Tourists usually engage in recreational water sports once they travel in the waters. Here are some of the few recreational water activities that are done for enjoyment, exploration and pleasure.

Objectives of the study

- To know about the potential of water sports on moving water in Himachal Pradesh.
- To know about the different types of water sports activity in Himachal Pradesh.
- To find out the famous water sports destination in Himachal Pradesh.
- To know about the importance of recreational water sports.

Research methodology

This study is done by using secondary data sources and observations during the research. The secondary data sources include previous journals, water sports activities, previous water sports tourism news, magazines and different online data origins internet platform like YouTube, Facebook, blogs and posts. All the information is collected from different source with a deep study to understand the water sports activities. To increase reliability of result of this study new and fresh data are collected. Study is done by understanding the various old and new water sports trends, destinations in Himachal Pradesh for doing water sports and its contribution in the environment and nature. Some information has been also taken from the online articles and adventure activity sites. There is no dearth of amazing destinations here that facilitates avenues for water sports activities in the hills to enjoy. Water Sports in Himachal Pradesh can be enjoyed in both summer and winter season.

Popular water sports (running water) destination of Himachal Pradesh River rafting

Man is always dreaming up of new adventures. River rafting is adventurous sport, which has been practiced by men through years. Rafting is a white water sport. It is recreational outdoor activities which use an inflatable raft to navigate a river or other bodies of water. The term white water refers to foamy and whitish appearance of fast flowing water or different degrees of rough water. During the past 15 years or so, Rubber Rafts, Canoes and Kayaks and other crafts, have run many of the great rivers in India. Apart from the logistic arrangements regarding the transportation of boats to the starting points and again at the end of the journey to transport them back there are no serious problems in river running. River running in the white waters is extremely thrilling but it can also be risky.

Adventure seekers can have thrilling experience by indulging into river rafting or white-water rafting as it is commonly called in Himachal Pradesh. The snow fed rivers in the state that swiftly rush down the slopes of the Himalayan ranges offer easy to tough challenges to the rafters. The four major destinations where rafting enthusiasts can enjoy this exhilarating sport are rivers Chandrabhaga (Chenab) in Lahaul, the Satluj near Shimla, the Ravi near Chamba and the Beas near Kullu.

• Rafting in Kullu

Kullu, the Valley of Gods located between the majestic Himalayas and enchanting river Beas offers you an extensive range of scapades, two of the most famous are river rafting and paragliding. River raft under the glory of the sun where the water cools you down. Manali is a heaven for people who love adventure and nature. Kullu-Manali is famous for its beautiful mountains and lush green forests along with various adventure activities. Amongst them, approximately 7 KM stretch of rafting at the river Beas for a span of 30 minutes river is one of the most famous adventure activities conducted in the Beas river. The river offers 1 to 6 grades of rapids that you will be facing throughout the activity. Enjoy the exciting river rafting activity in the Himalayan waters is an experience worth cherishing. The cool breeze, views of the majestic Himalayas, the sheer feel of flying, and getting a bird's eye view - all of it makes it an absolutely magical experience altogether. Be a bird set free for freedom and a mermaid living to enjoy the water.

• River Rafting in Shimla

Tattapani in Shimla is an amazing spot for the adventure lover. A perfect combination of adventure and beauty, it remains one of the top places for water sports in Himachal Pradesh. An enthralling experience of River Rafting about 12 km in Tattapani (Chaba) of about 1.5 hours duration near Shimla is definitely one of the best. One can experience the thrill of level 3 rafting over the unregulated waves of Satlej River. This level-3 rafting amidst the serene and absolutely breathtaking nature of Shimla is an absolute kind of experience along with the companions. Enjoy the mesmerizing views of surrounding nature in the backdrop and hot springs. Get briefed by professional instructors who will also be available onboard to assist throughout the activity. With all the safety measures, experienced and certified instructors, there is nothing to worry about in this 12 km long rafting activity. A swimmer along with the guide will be on board to assist in emergencies. Best time to go for rafting in Tattapani is during May and June months to enjoy this thrilling water activity. This activity is ideal for the Groups, Solo and the Couples.

• River Rafting in Naldehra

Rafting is one of the most sought activities by adventure lovers and is an amazing experience of adrenaline rushing through the body when the person is cutting through the ripples of water. Rafting through the middle of the valleys of the Great Himalayas in Naldehra near Shimla makes this experience even better and memorable. The activity will be performed under the supervision of expert guides. This is a 10 km rafting experience, starting from Loti to Chaba. After reaching the rafting site, one will be given a briefing about the activity. Then prepare for the gush of adrenaline running through the body to hit the waves and the ripples of the river in the middle of the Mighty Himalayas.

• River Rafting in Chandrabhaga River

Youth and tourists can enjoy the rafting on the waves of Chandrabhaga in the tribal district of Lahaul-Spiti in Himachal Pradesh. The expert team of Atal Vihari Mountaineering Institute and Lahaul-Spiti administration have identified three places for river rafting on Chandra and Bhaga rivers. At present, there will be rafting on Bhaga River from Darcha to Jispa, while on Chandra River from North Portal of Atal Tunnel to Pagal Nala and from Muling Bridge to Tandi Sangam. The length of these three is from three to four kilometers. Three institutes associated with adventure sports have also registered themselves with the district administration for river rafting. However, the district administration has not allowed anyone to do Commercial River rafting on the Chandrabhaga River at present. Of all the rivers flowing in Himachal, the volume of water of Chandrabhaga river has been measured the most. However, the district administration has not allowed anyone to do Commercial River rafting on the Chandrabhaga River at present.

• River Rafting in Dalhousie

The River crossing and River Rafting is the popular activity of the Chamba district in Dalhousie, which is performed on the banks of the rivers, Ravi and Saal. The River Rafting is the popular activity of the Chamba district in Dalhousie, Himachal Pradesh, which is performed on the banks of the rivers, Ravi and Saal. Nowadays River rafting has also

flourished as a popular activity in Chamba, generally done on the rivers, Ravi and Saal. Tourists who like adventurous sports can come here for rafting in June and October. The government, as well as the private tour agencies here, should be contacted for rafting. These adventure activities are done under the supervision of trained instructors.

Boating at Tattapani, Shimla

Tattapani is a small village near Shimla. Nestled on the bank of the Satluj River, located at a distance of about 51 km from Shimla. Boating is one of the unique activities which one can indulge in while visiting Himachal Pradesh. Boating experience at Tattapani takes traveler closer to nature and its tranquillity, giving solace to the heart and the mind. Enjoy the ripples on the water while the boat passes, and experience the best of a panoramic view of nature while doing the activity. It is a perfect place for just chilling and relaxing. One can go for the paddle boating or motorboat, whichever is chosen. It is ideal for all age groups. Easy to moderate level. Best time to enjoy boating is between October to November.

Canyoning at vashist

Vashist is mere 2 km away from Manali where you can experience canyoning. It is a famous and exciting water sports in Himachal Pradesh as popular water sport activity over the Beas River. Being the most suitable place and considered the home to canyoning and rappelling activities, it is here that you can challenge yourself for this perfect adventure. Professionals are available here to offer you proper safety guidelines and to take care of your security. The duration of this activity is for approximately 4 to 5 hrs. Indulge in this water sports for unlimited fun and excitement. The difficulty level of canyoning is moderate. Best time to visit Vashist is between September to June months.

Fishing in Himachal Pradesh

Fishing is a very popular recreational sport activity, which will have an added thrill of roaring and rushing water streams.

- **Fishing in Manali**

Experience a fun and exciting fishing trip to Manalsu Nala in Old Manali and get to know the fun and exciting ways of fishing in the north. The Manali Fishing tour providers pride themselves on the diversity of fishing options that they offer, so whichever form of blue water fishing you are interested in, this is an adventure that is sure to impress you. An angler's paradise, Himachal has several spots for both trout and Mahaseer as well as other fish. Acclaimed as the best Trout fish in the world, both Brown and Rainbow Trout can be found in Himachal's streams. Fish also abounds in Beas River near Manali. Good spots on this beat are –Manualsu Nalla, Beas river, Haripur Nalla, Fozal Nalla and Baragrain Nalla that you can explore.

- **Fishing in River Parvati Kasol**

Not to mention, fishing is one of the most relished experiences throughout the world that keeps your patience high, allows you to explore nature around and relax in the sun while getting hunger pangs for a perfectly cooked dish later on. Seek the calmness of the waters in River Parvati in Kasol as you go for a fishing activity while appreciating the serene views of the lush greens and mystical hills. Look around Himalayan peaks, dip your feet in between and relax while sun-basking.

- **Fishing Barot Valley**

Situated at a height of 1835 meter Barot is a beautiful place on the bank of river Uhl. It is famous for its Trout Fish Farm. It is being operated by Fisheries Department and Angling Meet is organized every year. The reservoir of Shanan power project built by Britishers is located here and adds to the scenic beauty of Barot. Barot is also the Gateway to the Nargu Wildlife Sanctuary spread over area of 278 sq. kms. It is the home of Monal, Wild Cats, Monkeys and the Black Bear. Brot is also the base for trek routes to Kullu & Kangra Valleys. This area is also famous for vegetables and pulse production. It has beautiful sceneries all around which attracts everyone. Thousands of tourists visit this place every year.

- **Fishing in kasol**

Fishing is always a peaceful, relaxing activity and the beautiful ambience of hills and greener environment makes this activity tremendously favourable. Kasaol is in the Kullu district and situated on the banks of the Parvati River. You can enjoy fishing at the Parvati valley for as many hours depending on you. The best month for this activity is from April to November. Happy fishing!

- **Fishing In Jibhi**

Angling is less physically demanding then more of concentration, meditation and controlling your senses and body reflexes. The thrill, excitement and memories to treasure for lifetime. The Jibhi/Tirthan region which is 160 km away shimla and 60 km away from Kullu is blessed with suitable climate for the brown and rainbow trout (species of fish). So it is really interesting to do this mind healing activity in Jibhi. This activity is performed at Tirthan rivers.

- **Angling in Himachal Pradesh**

Sport fishing is a water sport in which anglers compete among themselves to catch a variety of different target fishes. The sport originated out of recreational fishing. Angling, or sport fishing, is catching fish by using an 'angle', or a fish hook. The hook is fixed to a fishing line, which is attached to a fishing rod (this, typically, is fitted with a fishing reel). To lure fish, the hook is dressed with a bait (often, a 'bite indicator' like a float is used). Baits can be natural (fishes' prey like worms, insects, earthworms and maggots – dead or alive) or artificial (a 'lure' can – but doesn't have to – represent real prey).

Angling is exciting water sport in Himachal Pradesh and enjoying this sport in the streams and rivers of the state will bless one with an unforgettable experience. Popular streams where tourists can enjoy angling are – Beas, Sutlej, Ravi, Uhl, Baspa, Pabar, Tirthan, Sainj, Lambadug, Nugal Gai, Giri, Rana, Baner, etc. The fish species available in these streams include: Trout, Mahseer, Barilus, Schizothoracids Crossocheilus and several species of Nemacheilus and Glyptothorax. The waters of Maharana Pratap Sagar Lake have both brown and rainbow trouts. Anglers must follow the rules and regulation imposed by the state government for fishing in these streams.

Water rock climbing

Himachal Pradesh is a hub of different types of water activities including famous water rock climbing. Make your tour plan for the best time for water sports in Himachal Pradesh to experience the adventures of water-rock climbing. It is one of the select few activities that attract a large chunk

of tourists in Vashist area. Apart from canyoning, it is also one of the activities that attract visitors.

With so much variety in water sports activities here, water-rock climbing is another activity that is performed in a small village Vashist, in the Kullu district. Water rock climbing is thrilling and it requires great strength, physical and mental strength both. Apart from the challenging experience, the pleasant weather and the peaceful green environment is like a desirable addition.

Jet SKI ride in Shimla

Jet skis are fast, powerful and create the perfect setting for loved ones to bond in. Jet Ski Rides are a fantastic way to get close to the water while enjoying the wild rush of the salt spray in your face and the feeling of skipping over the waves. Enjoy the adrenaline rush as you traverse the waves and leave your worries behind.

A beautiful and rustic town on the banks of waterway Sutej, where one can enjoy adventure and nature at the same time. Enjoy this fun activity Jet Skiing at Tattapani and get mesmerized by the captivating beauty of nature. Jet Ski is one of the unique activity which you must indulge in while visiting Shimla. Tattapani, which is approximately 50 km from Shimla, is a perfect place to experience the thrill of jet skiing for 15 Minutes with the best of 360-degree views. It is perfect for those people seeking adventure. Being one of the amazing water sport activities in Shimla, the adventure through Jet Ski Ride at Tattapani will take one close to a perfect adventure mode and its tranquillity in such water activities. Get yourself some thrilling experience at this exotic location to create some fun and adventurous memories for a lifetime.

Hot spring bath

Natural hot water spring in Himachal Pradesh is where one can bathe in any season, all seasons are appropriate and suitable for this activities. It is present at various locations, not only these places look scenic but the water is considered to be therapeutic by the locals, that tend to treat skin ailments. Have a look at a few of the most famous hot water springs in Himachal Pradesh that can refresh your mind -

- **Hot springs at Manikaran**, located in the Kullu district, positioned on the banks of river Parvati.
- **Tattapani in Mandi district**, along the river Sutlej is not only famous for boating but also for the hot spring baths as well. One can enjoy hot spring bath in Tattapani to relax your body and mind with total rejuvenation.
- **Vashist in Kullu district** is also a place known for hot spring bath.

Skiing: Himachal Pradesh which is usual covered with snow most of the year, skiing is one of the most famous activities performed by end numbers of tourists. November to February are the best month to go for skiing, sliding on the beautiful slope of Himachal and experiencing the adrenaline rush of this sport. Some of the best skiing destinations in Himachal Pradesh are -

- **Kufri** in district Shimla is the winter sports capital situated 13 kms. from the Ridge, at an altitude of 2,622 meters. It is ideal for skiing. In the past years it has become a big centre of attraction for the tourists during winter. From December to March it wears its white winter garb, with snow trimmings on its tall green pines and deodars trees.
- **Narkanda:** It is situated on the Hindustan Tibet Border

road. Skiing is available between December to February months.

- **Solang Nala:** It is located 13 km from Manali and offers skiing from October till March.

Conclusion

In today's society, sports events have become the focus of attention, occupy an important position in the sports industry, while bringing economic and social benefits. The main purpose of this study is to understand the types of water sports activity on running water available in Himachal Pradesh and its popular destinations. In the water sports activity, risk factor is also involved so this study also focus on the importance of safety gears at the time of activity. Water sports is game in which physical and mental preparation is necessary for doing it. Water sports activity is growing simultaneously and it is reflecting a great craze in the sports and adventure tourism. The new trends in water sports activity played an important role in the tourism to attract more and more visitors. This activity positive part is that it is environment friendly. Himachal Pradesh is a only state which has a large number of domestic and international visitors which boosts the tourism of India and their involvement in tourism provides positive impact on the economy of state. Government of India as well as Govt. of Himachal Pradesh is also focusing on the promotion and development of water sports destination at its higher level so that visitors get more relaxation and enjoyment.

The research results showed that modern sports events on water did not have any more power to attract physically inactive people than traditional water events, did not produce a greater desire to lead an active lifestyle, and did not encourage people to more regularly practice water sports. Moreover, modern events, compared to traditional events, were only a one-time experience and the people who completed survey often wanted to return to traditional sports events which provided participants with greater positive emotions than a modern event.

To sum up, presence of several lakes and rivers in Himachal Pradesh hold a promise for exciting water sports activities, tourism development, employment creation, and earning large sums of foreign exchange in addition to giving a fillip to overall economic and social development in the country. Much has been achieved, but much more still remains to be done. Since water-sports and tourism development is a multidimensional activity, it is essential that the private sector, voluntary organisations, respective state governments, and the central government do their best in this endeavour to make India a world player in this industry.

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